TPC Group Plant Explosion and Fire Update
Port Neches, Texas
December 1, 2019 1500 Update

Incident Management Objectives:

Objective 1: Ensure the health and safety of the public and response personnel.

Objective 2: Establish an incident management structure and processes employing the Incident Command System to enable effective overall management of the event with deployment of resources (staff and equipment) in a rapid, focused and well-coordinated manner.

Objective 3: Encourage a collaborative federalism approach, where Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments interact cooperatively and collectively to solve common problems.

Objective 4: Take actions to assess the on-site and off-site impacts during the emergency response phase of this incident. Provide this information to state and local authorities to assist them in their decision to protect the local citizens.

Objective 5: Conduct activities to prevent off-site releases from the TPC facility.

Objective 6: Respond to, mitigate and recovery off-site releases from the TPC facility.

Objective 7: Maintain open communication with Regional management.

Incident Overview:

On November 27, 2019, a report was received from the National Response Center about an explosion at a facility in Port Neches, TX.

A second explosion occurred at approximately 1400 on November 27, 2019. Residents within a four-mile radius of the site were ordered to evacuate. The evacuation was lifted at 1000 on November 29, 2019.

Executive Overview:

- Unified Command continues to run a 24-hour operational period: 0600 to 0600.
- The Port Neches-Groves ISD will be closed on Monday, December 2, 2019.
- As of 1500 hours today, a few fires continue to burn. TPC will continue to provide water suppression to the process area until the fires extinguish themselves. Smoke and particulate matter is low today. The wind has primarily been out of the north and northwest today, pushing the plume to the south and southeast.

- At 2325 on November 30, 2019, the South 45-B tower, which had been leaning, collapsed and fell to the east and is currently laying on the pipe rack. No injuries were reported during this incident, and all personnel have been accounted for. For safety purposes, all personnel were evacuated from the site and response activities were discontinued until daylight. The unmanned sprayers continued to supply firefighting water.
- At 0100 on December 1, 2019, CTEH air monitoring teams began picking up readings of butadiene at the Command Post located at the intersection of Highway 366 and SPUR 136. Instantaneous readings were 3.0 ppm and sustained readings were 2.28 ppm. The command post was moved. The sustained readings continued through the night from 1.0 ppm to 0.94 ppm at 0530. However, there have been no detections in the community or in any other area.
- In response to the instantaneous 3.0 ppm readings for butadiene, EPA air teams deployed to the community southeast of the detections, as wind was out of the northwest, and TCEQ air monitoring teams were dispatched to the intersection of highway 366 and SPUR 136. TCEQ reported instantaneous readings of 0.52 ppm for butadiene along with odors at the intersection. EPA air monitoring teams could not confirm these readings.
- CTEH has conducted 899 readings for 1,3-butadiene on December 1, 2019. As of approximately 1330 hours, 23 detections were recorded with a maximum reading of 3.22 ppm. The detections all occurred in the work area, and not in the community.
- Unified Command has given permission for fluorine free foam use if necessary, for vapor suppression in emergency situations. TPC plans to stage 6 totes of foam for vapor suppression tomorrow. The Safety Data Sheets for the foam initially used on November 27, 2019 confirmed that the approximate 1,320 gallons did contain PFOS compounds.
- The current estimated rate of water use for fire suppression is approximately 14,000 gpm. Of that water use, 7,000 gallon per minute (gpm) is recycled water, leaving a net total of 7,000 gpm of freshwater use.
- The WWTP continues pumping firewater from the storage ponds into the WWTP. The current pumping rate is 7,000 gpm.
- As of 1700 on November 30, 2019, there is no longer a discharge of water from the 201 Outfall. This has reduced the water level in the affected canal.
- TPC has placed 4000’ of 18’’ hard boom and 5300’ absorbent boom along the downstream path to the Neches River. As of December 1, 2019, the furthest extent of the sheen was 1.3 miles upstream from the Neches River. Sheen has been observed up to the Port Neches/Atlantic Road approximately 2 miles from the outfall.
- Unified Command received a report of approximately 100 – 300 small dead fish at the canal waterfall upstream of the Port Neches Atlantic Road Bridge at 1000 hours on December 1, 2019. TCEQ has activated their Surface Water Quality Management Team (SWQMT) for water sampling. EPA’s water samples were taken upstream and downstream of this site. TPC has contacted Wildlife Response Services to respond to the incident. The Department of Interior, US Fish and Wildlife, and Texas Parks and Wildlife are briefed daily and were notified of the observed fish kill.
- On December 1, 2019 EPA collected 3 water samples in the affected canal up to the Neches River and 1 water sample upstream of the incident. Samples will be analyzed for VOCs, SVOCs, Oil and Grease, Glycols, Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons, and Total Organic Carbon. Samples, including those collected on November 30, will be delivered to ALS Laboratory in Houston for analysis on Monday morning, with a requested 24-hour turnaround time on all analyses, except for SVOCs which has a 72-hour turnaround time.
- ASPECT conducted a fly-over of the site on the afternoon November 30, 2019. No detections were recorded. ASPECT conducted a fly-over of the site on the morning of December 1, 2019. ASPECT reported a reading of isobutylene of 1ppm at approximately

the intersection of Orchard Road and Highway 366. ASPECT is flying again at 1500 and will attempt to confirm that reading.

- A Story Map has been created for the incident and is public at the https://response.epa.gov/south4groupfire website.

Resources as of 1500 on December 1, 2019

	EPA	Contractors
Port Neches	3	9
Off site	3	6